For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE

CARDI targets youths in Over The Hill (OTH) Community Development Partnership Initiative

26 February, 2020, The Bahamas – The Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) is delighted to introduce and support the development of climate smart food production technologies and practices in 13 schools in the Over The Hill (OTH) Community. Working in collaboration with the OTH Committee and the Ministry of Education, CARDI Bahamas will oversee the establishment, demonstration and training in innovative climate smart, land less and soil less crop production systems in the targeted schools and surrounding communities.

CARDI will deliberately keep the systems simple so as to keep costs down while ensuring they can be easily understood and replicated by students and parents at home. Some of the systems include PVC hydroponics, grow boxes, trellising and micro tunnels. Hands on training will be complemented by capacity building initiatives and supplemented by user friendly information products such as factsheets and manuals. These activities will be supported by the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, The University of the West Indies, (St Augustine) regional expert on climate smart food production systems and will also include local stakeholders like the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, to ensure that there is knowledge transfer in country, particularly as it relates to youth.

The schools’ outreach programme complements the six pillars of the OTH Community – social empowerment, economic empowerment, rejuvenation, smart technology, green and sustainable technology and the youth and elderly. It also directly supports CARDI’s Youth and Gender Strategy and Global OJT Programme as well as the Government of Bahamas’ drive to reduce food imports and promote self-sufficiency.
Over 5,000 children between the ages of 4-16, their parents and communities will directly benefit from this project. The project will: expose students to new technologies in the production of safe and nutritious fresh food; introduce them to agriculture career paths and ensure healthy eating habits take root in the early years. Additionally, it will positively contribute to the development of the students’ social skills and mental well-being. Through this intervention, both students and persons from the OTC will be exposed to the basic principles involved in the construction of these systems, which can be advanced into business opportunities for increased social and economic empowerment.

Cognisant of the critical role of teachers in the success of this initiative, the project will support and coach them through several capacity building initiatives. The knowledge and skills gleaned with help to ensure the sustainability of the programme. Classroom sessions using the farmer field school approach will greatly enhance the sustainability of these projects.

The surrounding school communities will also benefit from practical training in the construction of these novel systems, the purchase of excess fresh produce and planting material. Barton Clarke, CARDI’s Executive Director says “at the community level we want to inspire change through sustainable agriculture practices. The adoption of these simple production technologies will create job opportunities and stimulate a higher standard of living for citizens in the OTH community”.

The OTH Community project is supported by the Prime Minister’s Office, Dr The Honourable Hubert Minnis whose vision is to rejuvenate and restore pride in the disadvantaged communities.

To facilitate this activity CARDI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of the Bahamas in January 2020.

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For more information, please contact
CARDI Bahamas
Dr. Michele Singh
Email: msingh@cardi.org
About CARDI

CARDI (www.cardi.org) was established in 1974 to serve the agricultural research and development needs of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARDI is positioned to contribute to the sustainable development of the Caribbean by the co-generation, diffusion and application of knowledge, through agricultural research for development. The Institute’s Headquarters is located at the University Campus, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.